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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary General**

Summary

The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 58/148. It reviews steps taken by the Assembly and its Main Committees during its fifty-eighth session to promote the achievement of the goal of gender equality through the gender-mainstreaming strategy. Particular focus is placed on actions taken in relation to the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration and at major events during the past year. An assessment of the work of the Economic and Social Council in the coordination segment to review the implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 is also provided. Finally, the catalytic role of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in support of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes of the United Nations is addressed.

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** The submission of the report was delayed owing to the need to reflect the outcome of the coordination segment of the 2004 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 58/148 of 22 December 2003, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women on follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] and on the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly, with an assessment of progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system, including by providing information on key achievements, lessons learned and best practices, and to recommend further measures and strategies for future action within the United Nations system. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. Reports entitled "Measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century', especially in mainstreaming gender perspectives in entities of the United Nations system" (E/CN.6/2004/3) and "Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" (E/2004/59) were submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, respectively.

3. The present report reviews steps taken by the Assembly and its Main Committees during its fifty-eighth session to promote the achievement of the goal of gender equality through the gender-mainstreaming strategy. Particular focus is placed on actions taken in relation to the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration and at major events during the past year. An assessment of the work of the Economic and Social Council on gender mainstreaming in the coordination segment to review the implementation of agreed conclusions 1997/2 is also provided. Finally, the catalytic role of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in support of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes of the United Nations is addressed.

II. General Assembly

A. World Summit on the Information Society

4. The World Summit on the Information Society adopted on 12 December 2003 its Declaration of Principles, entitled "Building the information society: a global challenge in the new millennium" (WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E), and Plan of Action (WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5-E). The Declaration of Principles emphasized that the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) provided enormous opportunities for women, who should form an integral part of, and be key actors in, the information society. Member States expressed their commitment to ensuring that the information society enabled women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. They agreed that gender perspectives should be mainstreamed and ICT used as a tool to that end.

5. The Plan of Action emphasized that gender barriers to ICT education and training should be removed and equal training opportunities in ICT-related fields promoted for women and girls. The Summit recommended that gender-sensitive curricula in formal and non-formal education for all be strengthened and that communication and media literacy for women be enhanced with a view to building the capacity of girls and women.

6. Governments, in collaboration with stakeholders, were encouraged to formulate ICT policies that foster the participation of women. The Plan of Action recognized women's roles as health providers in their families and communities. The development of best practices for e-workers and e-employers, built on principles of gender equality, was encouraged, as well as the promotion of teleworking to increase employment opportunities for women. Balanced and diverse portrayals of women and men by the media should be promoted.

7. The Plan of Action further recommended that gender-specific indicators on ICT use and needs be developed and that measurable performance indicators be identified to assess the impact of funded ICT projects on the lives of women and girls. An ICT development report, to be published on an annual or biannual basis, would provide a gender analysis of ICT policies and their implementation.

B. Eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

8. At the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XI), held from 13 to 18 June 2004, Member States adopted the documents entitled "UNCTAD XI — The Spirit of São Paulo" (TD/L.382) and "São Paulo Consensus" (TD/410).

9. The São Paulo Consensus recognized that gender equality was essential for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation. It emphasized that trade and development policies in developing countries should be aimed at reducing poverty and supporting growth, sustainable development and gender equality. UNCTAD was requested to support developing countries in analysing appropriate linkages between trade and gender. The São Paulo Consensus further emphasized that ICT could be harnessed to play a central role in economic development and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including on gender equality. For effective implementation and wider distribution of the benefits of ICT, gender perspectives should be included in national ICT strategies.

C. Implementation of and follow-up to major international conferences and summits

10. In its resolution 58/148, the General Assembly called upon Governments and other actors to continue to integrate a gender perspective into the implementation of and follow-up to recent United Nations conferences, summits and special sessions and in future reports on this subject. In its resolution 58/206 of 23 December 2003, the Assembly specifically encouraged the incorporation of gender perspectives into

the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development.

11. A number of reports of the Secretary-General to the Second and Third Committees on the follow-up to international conferences, summits and special sessions of the General Assembly paid some attention to gender perspectives. Only the report on the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/58/170) did not contain any references to gender perspectives. The reports on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/58/160) and the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/58/216) contained specific recommendations for further action.

12. The report on ageing contained a separate section on the gender dimensions of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its implementation. The recommendations on gender equality in the report were reflected in resolution 58/134 of 22 December 2003. Organizations, specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system were requested to integrate ageing from a gender perspective into their programmes of work and to report on their progress to the Commission for Social Development. The bureaux of the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women were requested to further coordinate and collaborate on the issues of older women within their respective multi-year programmes of work. The Assembly recommended that the institutional linkages between United Nations gender focal points and focal points on ageing be strengthened to enhance integration of the gender aspects of ageing throughout the system. It also encouraged the establishment of institutional linkages at the national level between national machineries for the advancement of women and those governmental entities responsible for the development, implementation and coordination of ageing-related policies and programmes.

13. The report on the implementation of and follow-up to commitments and agreements made at the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/58/216) recommended that financial services be strengthened for poor households, women, and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including in rural areas. No subsequent reference was made to these issues in resolution 58/230 of 23 December 2003.

14. The Assembly adopted resolutions on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to outcomes of the major United Nations conferences, summits and special sessions of the General Assembly, including the Millennium Summit (resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004); the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (resolution 58/130 of 22 December 2003); the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (resolution 58/160 of 22 December 2003); the World Summit on Sustainable Development (resolution 58/218 of 23 December 2003); the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (resolution 58/226 of 23 December 2003); and the special sessions on HIV/AIDS (resolution 58/236 of 23 December 2003) and on children (resolution 58/282 of 9 February 2004). The importance of integrating gender perspectives into the follow-up to these conferences was clearly articulated in the resolutions on social development, racism and HIV/AIDS. Recommendations for action were provided in the resolutions on racism and HIV/AIDS. The resolution on

Habitat II encouraged Governments and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to continue to promote partnerships with women's groups.

15. In its resolution 58/236, the Assembly urged Member States to intensify national efforts and international cooperation in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, including by strengthening policies and programmes related to ensuring gender equality and intensifying prevention measures for women.

16. In its resolution 58/160, the Assembly stressed the responsibility of States to mainstream a gender perspective into the design and development of prevention, education and protection measures aimed at the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at all levels, so as to ensure that they effectively target the distinct situations of women and men. It also called upon all States to formulate and implement without delay, at the national, regional and international levels, policies and plans of action to combat the gender-based manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals

17. The Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report (A/58/323) on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which analysed progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including on the specific goals of gender equality and empowerment of women, and maternal health. The report paid some attention to gender perspectives in the context of hunger. In addition, one section of it was specifically devoted to women's rights, covering issues such as violence against women and trafficking in women. The report concluded that persistent gender inequality aggravated the problems of poverty, conflict and HIV/AIDS and restricted efforts to find solutions. The role of gender inequality in the continued spread of HIV was increasingly acknowledged in global and national policy discussions, as was the importance of empowering women if efforts to reverse the spread were to succeed. Governments had yet to translate this recognition into commitment by allocating sufficient resources or through effective implementation.

D. The General Assembly and its Main Committees

18. In its resolution 58/148, the General Assembly recognized the need to further include a gender perspective in the work of its Main Committees. This section reviews reports of the Secretary-General and draft resolutions adopted by the Main Committees of the Assembly during the fifty-eighth session. While none of the Assembly's Main Committees reflected gender perspectives systematically, the Second and Third Committees paid some attention to gender equality and the advancement of women.

1. Resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee

19. Resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee that incorporated gender perspectives addressed the issues of sport, peace and security, humanitarian and relief assistance, mine action, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, and global partnerships. In about half of these resolutions, the Assembly went beyond recognizing the

importance of gender equality perspectives and provided concrete requests or recommendations.

20. In the context of sport, in its resolution 58/5 of 3 November 2003, the Assembly invited Governments, the United Nations, its funds and programmes, the specialized agencies, where appropriate, and sport-related institutions to work collectively so that sport and physical education could present opportunities for solidarity and cooperation in order to promote a culture of peace and social and gender equality and to advance dialogue and harmony.

21. In the area of peace and security, in its resolution 58/27 B of 5 December 2003, the Assembly appealed to the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan and the international community to mainstream gender issues into all humanitarian assistance and future rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes and to actively promote the full and equal participation of and benefit to both women and men in those programmes, underlining the importance of a senior gender adviser in this context.

22. In promoting religious and cultural understanding in its resolution 58/128 of 19 December 2003, the Assembly encouraged Governments to integrate gender perspectives while promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among human beings in all their diversity of religion, belief, culture and language.

23. In its resolution 58/121 of 17 December 2003, the Assembly encouraged further efforts to address gender issues, including the needs for research, services and appropriate legislation to combat domestic violence and other gender-related crimes, in assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for Timor-Leste. In its resolution 58/123 of 17 December 2003, the Assembly renewed its urgent appeal to the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to continue to consider the special needs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and stressed the need to mainstream gender perspectives within overall reconstruction efforts.

24. In its resolution 58/127 of 19 December 2003, on assistance in mine action, the Assembly invited Member States to develop and support national programmes, where appropriate, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations, to reduce the risks posed by landmines and other unexploded ordnance, including to women and children. It also encouraged Member States, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations to take further action to mainstream a gender perspective and integrate gender and age-appropriate considerations into all aspects of mine-action programming.

25. In its resolution 58/129 of 19 December 2003, on global partnerships, the Assembly encouraged the private sector to engage as reliable and consistent partners in the development process and to take into account not only the economic and financial, but also the developmental, social, human rights, gender and environmental implications of their undertakings.

2. First Committee: disarmament and international security issues

26. A large number of reports and notes were before the First Committee. One report, on curbing illicit traffic and trade in small arms and light weapons and

consolidating peace through practical disarmament measures (A/58/207), and two notes, on illicit trade in small and light weapons (A/58/138) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (A/58/259), drew some attention to gender perspectives in the main body of the text. None of these documents mentioned gender issues in their conclusions or made recommendations aimed at gender equality. None of the draft resolutions adopted contained references to gender perspectives.

3. Second Committee: economic and financial issues

27. During the fifty-eighth session, one agenda item of the Second Committee was specifically devoted to women in development. The report of the Secretary-General on this topic (A/58/135) provided an overall assessment of progress towards women's empowerment and integration in development; the contribution of global conferences and summits to this effect; and tools for accelerating the empowerment of women and the integration of gender perspectives in development. The report contained recommendations addressed to various actors, for the Assembly's consideration, on the need for increased consideration of gender perspectives in follow-up to international conferences and summits; more effective and integrated utilization of existing planning and monitoring instruments to promote and monitor the empowerment of women and integration of gender perspectives into development processes; development of capacity-building; and collection of data disaggregated by sex.

28. In its resolution 58/206, on women in development, the Assembly urged all Governments to develop and promote strategies to mainstream a gender perspective in the design and implementation of economic and development policies and in the monitoring and evaluation of related programmes of action. It called for specific measures to eliminate discrimination against women with regard to their access to credit and legal assistance, giving special attention to poor, uneducated women. The resolution also called for laws to ensure that women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through inheritance, and administrative reforms and other measures to give women the same rights as men to credit, capital, appropriate technologies and access to markets and information. Governments were called upon to encourage the financial sector to mainstream a gender perspective in its policies and programmes. They were also urged to create and maintain a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive legal environment by reviewing legislation, with a view to removing discriminatory provisions, preferably by 2005.

29. Other reports before the Second Committee that paid attention to gender perspectives included the reports on international migration and development (A/58/98); the International Year of Mountains, 2002 (A/58/134); the United Nations Population Award 2003 (A/58/151); the role of public administration in the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/152); the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (A/58/164); the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and the draft programme of action for the International Year of Microcredit, 2005 (A/58/179); the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/58/277); the state of South-South cooperation (A/58/319); progress towards and challenges and constraints to the achievement of the major development goals and objectives

adopted by the United Nations during the past decade (A/58/327); raising public awareness of and support for South-South cooperation (A/58/345); and human resources development (A/58/348). Four of these reports mentioned gender issues in their conclusions and/or provided recommendations aimed at gender equality.

30. The conclusions and recommendations of the report on human resources development (A/58/348) emphasized that gender equality considerations should be integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of human resources development policies and programmes. The Secretary-General recommended concerted efforts to significantly increase investments in health and education, with the aim of providing access to these services to all persons living in poverty, both women and men. While recognizing the need to integrate human resources development into comprehensive strategies that mainstream a gender perspective, the Assembly, in resolution 58/207 of 23 December 2003, urged the adoption of cross-sectoral approaches to human resources development, including the empowerment of women. The United Nations system was encouraged to give specific attention to women, girls and vulnerable groups in its activities aimed at building human and international capacity.

31. In the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and the draft programme of action for the International Year of Microcredit, 2005 (A/58/179), the Secretary-General emphasized that microcredit and other financial services for poor people were important instruments for poverty reduction and for empowering poor people, especially women. Expanding outreach could contribute to achieving the goals of major conferences and summits as well as the Millennium Development Goals, particularly targets related to halving the proportion of the people living in extreme poverty by 2015 and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. In its resolution 58/222 of 23 December 2003, on the implementation of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the Assembly encouraged the use of gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into planning the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes for the eradication of poverty.

32. The recommendations of the report on the International Year of Mountains, 2002 (A/58/134), invited the Assembly to consider recommending to Governments that they support the strengthening of the rights of mountain women to resources and their role in their communities and cultures, and consider the recommendations of the Thimpu Declaration, adopted at the Celebrating Mountain Women conference. This recommendation was reflected in resolution 58/216 of 23 December 2003.

33. The Second Committee adopted a number of other draft resolutions that integrated gender perspectives. These were adopted under its agenda items on macroeconomic policy questions; sustainable development and international economic cooperation; environment and sustainable development; and globalization and interdependence.

34. In its resolution 58/202 of 23 December 2003, the Assembly called on multilateral financial institutions, in providing policy advice and financial support to member countries, to minimize the negative impact of the adjustment programmes on vulnerable segments of society, while taking into account the importance of gender-sensitive employment and poverty eradication policies and strategies.

35. In its resolution 58/208 of 23 December 2003, on international migration, adopted under the agenda item on sustainable development and international economic cooperation, the Assembly called upon relevant entities of the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations to continue to address this issue, from a gender perspective, in a more coherent way within the broader context of the implementation of agreed economic and social development goals and respect for all human rights.

36. In its resolution 58/217 of 23 December 2003, the Assembly decided to give greater focus to water-related issues at all levels in the implementation of water-related programmes and projects during the next decade (2005-2015), while striving to ensure the participation and involvement of women in these activities.

37. Most draft resolutions adopted by the Second Committee that addressed gender perspectives went beyond identifying the issues and welcoming efforts to incorporate gender perspectives into policies and programmes, and made concrete recommendations on actions to be taken.

4. Third Committee: social, humanitarian and cultural issues

38. Although many reports before the Third Committee made reference to gender perspectives, few of them provided concrete recommendations for further action.

39. The Third Committee adopted a number of draft resolutions that integrated gender perspectives. These were adopted under its agenda items on social development; crime prevention and criminal justice; international drug control; questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions; promotion and protection of the rights of children; elimination of racism and racial discrimination; and human rights. Almost half of the draft resolutions that mentioned gender perspectives contained concrete recommendations on actions to be taken to achieve gender equality.

a. Advancement of women

40. Two agenda items of the Third Committee, on the advancement of women and follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, were specifically devoted to gender equality. The Committee reviewed several reports, including on violence against women migrant workers (A/58/161); follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session (A/58/166); improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/58/167 and Add.1); and traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls (A/58/169).

41. Resolutions were adopted on, inter alia, women and political participation (resolution 58/142 of 22 December 2003), violence against women migrant workers (resolution 58/143 of 22 December 2003); improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (resolution 58/146 of 22 December 2003); elimination of domestic violence against women (resolution 58/147 of 22 December 2003); and follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (resolution 58/148).

b. Human rights

42. Of the 31 reports on human rights reviewed, 17 made reference to women and/or gender equality. While some reports provided analysis of gender perspectives, others made only cursory references to gender perspectives. Four reports contained specific recommendations aimed at achieving gender equality.

43. Under the agenda item on human rights, the Assembly adopted 35 resolutions, of which 11 provided concrete requests or recommendations for action aimed at achieving gender equality.

Implementation of human rights instruments

44. The reports before the Committee in its agenda item on the implementation of human rights instruments provided little or no attention to gender equality perspectives. None of the reports provided concrete recommendations for action.

45. The Assembly adopted two resolutions, "Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (resolution 58/164 of 22 December 2003) and "International Covenants on human rights" (resolution 58/165 of 22 December 2003), that urged a number of actors to take actions aimed at achieving gender equality. In resolution 58/164, Governments were urged to take effective measures to provide redress and to prevent gender-based manifestations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. States parties were invited to incorporate a gender perspective into reports to the Committee against Torture. The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of torture was invited to continue to examine questions of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment directed against women, and conditions conducive to such torture, and to make appropriate recommendations for the prevention and redress of gender-specific forms of torture, including rape or any other form of sexual violence, and to exchange views with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and its consequences, with the aim of enhancing their effectiveness and mutual cooperation. Donor and recipient countries were invited to bear in mind a gender perspective when considering including matters relating to the protection of human rights and the prevention of torture in their bilateral programmes and projects for training armed forces, security forces, prison, police and health-care personnel. In resolution 58/165, in stressing the importance of fully integrating gender perspectives into the implementation of the International Covenants on human rights at the national level, the Assembly urged States parties to utilize data disaggregated by sex in their reports.

Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

46. Two reports under this agenda item included gender perspectives in their conclusions: the report on the human rights of migrants submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the human rights of migrants (see A/58/275) and the interim report on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on freedom of religion and belief (see A/58/296).

47. In its resolution 58/190 of 22 December 2003, on the protection of migrants, the Assembly reiterated the need for all States parties to protect fully the universally recognized human rights of migrants, especially women and children, regardless of their legal status, and to treat them humanely, in particular with regard to assistance and protection. States, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, were encouraged to undertake information campaigns aimed at clarifying opportunities, limitations and rights in the event of migration, so as to enable migrants, in particular women, to make informed decisions, and to protect them from victimization by traffickers and from utilizing dangerous means of access that put their lives and physical integrity at risk.

48. Of the reports reviewed, one contained specific recommendations on gender equality (see A/58/330). In that report, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food emphasized that gender discrimination persisted in a variety of forms that had profound effects on women's right to food. The Special Rapporteur provided several recommendations addressed to Governments and the international financial institutions to end such discrimination. In its resolution 58/186 of 22 December 2003, the Assembly encouraged the Special Rapporteur to mainstream a gender perspective in the activities relating to his mandate and encouraged all States to take action to address discrimination against women, particularly where it contributed to the malnutrition of women and girls, and to ensure that women had equal access to resources, including income, land and water, to enable them to feed themselves.

49. Several resolutions made cursory references to gender perspectives; only nine provided substantive references to gender perspectives. These included the resolution on the right to development (resolution 58/172 of 22 December 2003); physical and mental health (resolution 58/173 of 22 December 2003); internally displaced persons (resolution 58/177 of 22 December 2003); access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (resolution 58/179 of 22 December 2003); administration of justice (resolution 58/183 of 22 December 2003); the situation in Cambodia (resolution 58/191 of 22 December 2003); the effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (resolution 58/182 of 22 December 2003); and an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women (resolution 58/185 of 22 December 2003). Six resolutions made recommendations on gender issues.

50. With regard to the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, in resolution 58/173 States were called upon to place a gender perspective at the centre of all policies and programmes affecting women's health. They were also called upon, in resolution 58/179, to ensure that those at risk of contracting malaria, in particular pregnant women and children under five years of age, benefited from the most suitable combination of personal and community protective measures.

51. In resolution 58/182, States and the international community were urged to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and to apply a gender perspective while doing so. States were also called upon to give special attention to the promotion and protection of the human rights of children belonging to minorities, taking into account the differentiated risks facing girls and boys.

52. In its resolution 58/183, on human rights in the administration of justice, the Assembly invited Governments to provide gender-sensitive human rights training in the administration of justice. Governments, relevant international and regional bodies, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations were invited to devote increased attention to the issue of women in prison, including children of women in prison, with a view to identifying the key problems and ways in which they can be addressed.

53. In its resolution 58/191, on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, the Assembly called upon the Government of Cambodia to meet the special needs of women and children while taking further measures to improve their conditions of detention. In the section on the protection of women and children, the Assembly requested the Government and the international community to strengthen their concerted efforts to comprehensively address the problem of growing international human trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children. The Government was urged to take further measures to combat violence against women in all its forms and to take all steps to meet its obligations as a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, by seeking technical assistance.

54. In its resolution 58/185, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study of all forms of violence against women. This study would be disaggregated by type of violence and be based on research undertaken and data collected at the national, regional and international levels.

Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

55. The reports under this agenda item contained limited information on gender equality perspectives; only three provided specific recommendations aimed at achieving gender equality.

56. The interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see A/58/534) contained two specific recommendations on the rights of women and children, including those who were victims of sexual violence. In resolution 58/196 of 22 December 2003, all parties to the conflict were urged to meet the special needs of women and girls in post-conflict reconstruction; to ensure the full participation of women in all aspects of conflict resolution and peace processes as a matter of priority; and to implement all necessary measures aimed at ending the widespread violations of human rights and impunity, in particular with regard to sexual violence against women and children. The Secretary-General was requested to encourage the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to continue to actively address the issues of gender, the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and the fight to eliminate violence against women and to provide adequate training to all Mission personnel in this regard.

57. In the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi (see A/58/448), the international community was requested to encourage the various actors — Governments, United Nations agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations — to develop a system for coordinating activities designed to improve the status of women and protect their rights.

58. In resolution 58/195 of 22 December 2003, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was called upon to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls.

c. Other issues

59. Of 17 reports before the Third Committee under other agenda items, such as those on crime, social development, youth and refugees, 12 contained references to women or gender equality; one provided specific requests or recommendations on gender equality issues. The latter, the *Report on the World Social Situation, 2003* (A/58/153/Rev.1), emphasized that the implementation of employment-creation policies should meet the challenges presented by various economic sectors and address gender-based discrimination. It urged that credit policies be modified so as to enable older persons, women and youth who wished to start their own businesses to have greater access to microcredit and other loan schemes.

60. In its resolution 58/137 of 22 December 2003, on international cooperation in preventing and combating trafficking in persons and protecting victims of such trafficking, the Assembly urged Member States to ensure that measures taken against trafficking in persons, especially women and children, were consistent with internationally recognized principles of non-discrimination and that they respected the human rights and fundamental freedoms of victims. Member States were also called upon to use improved technical cooperation to strengthen local and national institutions aimed at preventing trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in countries of origin. In resolution 58/149 of 22 December 2003, all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were requested to pay particular attention to meeting the special needs of refugee women and children and displaced persons.

61. Under the agenda item on the rights of children, the Assembly adopted one resolution specifically on the girl child (resolution 58/156 of 22 December 2003), which called upon all States to strengthen national machineries to implement policies and programmes for the girl child, to enact and enforce legislation to protect girls from all forms of violence and exploitation and to take special measures for the protection of girls affected by armed conflicts as well as in pre-conflict and post-conflict situations. States were further urged to promote gender equality and equal access to basic social services and to mainstream a gender perspective in all development policies and programmes. The Secretary-General was requested to ensure that all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system take into account the rights and the particular needs of the girl child in their country programmes of cooperation in accordance with national priorities, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In its resolution 58/157 of 22 December 2003, on the rights of the child, the Assembly called on all States to strengthen their national statistical capacities and to collect and use comprehensive data disaggregated by age, sex and other relevant factors.

62. With regard to the incompatibility between democracy and racism, in its resolution 58/159 of 22 December 2003, the Assembly invited the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the treaty bodies to continue to pay particular attention to violations of human rights stemming from the rise of racism and xenophobia in political circles and in society at large, with due consideration to a gender perspective, especially as regards their incompatibility with democracy.

5. Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

63. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee considered a large number of reports. While four of them ("Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East" (A/58/13 and Corr.1); "Questions relating to information" (A/58/175); "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories" (A/58/311); "Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for Palestine refugees" (A/58/339)) paid attention to gender perspectives in the main body of the text, none of them mentioned gender issues in their conclusions or made recommendations aimed at achieving gender equality. None of the resolutions adopted by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee paid attention to women or gender perspectives.

6. Fifth Committee: administrative and budgetary issues

64. Of 60 reports and 10 notes before the Fifth Committee, 12 reports and 1 note contained one or several references to women or gender.

65. The report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the financial performance report for 2001/2002 and the proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for 2003/2004 (A/57/776) had discussed the proposal to establish two posts — one senior gender adviser and one General Service post — that would enable the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to implement an integrated, coherent gender-mainstreaming programme and relevant activities in peacekeeping missions, in line with the Organization's policy on gender mainstreaming.

66. References were made to women and gender in the budget performance reports for 2002/2003 and the budgets for 2004/2005 for the United Nations Missions in Kosovo (A/58/634 and A/58/638 and Corr.1), for MONUC (A/58/684 and A/58/701) and for the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/58/703 and Add.1 and A/58/715). Reference was also made to these issues in the budgets for 2004/2005 for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (A/58/661) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (A/58/788), as well as in the interim budget for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (May-December 2004) (A/58/800).

67. The report on the budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for 2004/2005 (A/58/744) emphasized that UNICEF had the staffing and technical expertise to coordinate initiatives on women combatants but that financial resources were lacking.

68. Annex I to resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003 proposed changes to the programme narratives of the proposed programme budgets for the biennium 2004-2005. References were made to gender equality in the context of economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean (section 21) and protection of and assistance to refugees (section 25).

III. Economic and Social Council

69. One of the two themes of the coordination segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2004 was "Review and appraisal of the

system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system". The report before the Council (E/2004/59) provided an overall analysis of gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and at the intergovernmental level since 1997. It also highlighted the contribution of inter-agency collaboration, in particular through the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. While considerable efforts had been undertaken to implement gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system, and significant achievements had been made, much remained to be done to fully implement the commitments on gender mainstreaming in the Beijing Platform for Action and the agreed conclusions of the Council.

70. The report emphasized that the gap between policy and practice remained a major constraint. While gender-specific policies and strategies, capacity-building programmes, methodology development, and inter-agency collaboration had been developed, the full implementation of gender mainstreaming required further efforts to integrate gender perspectives into policies and strategies in all sectoral areas, all capacity-building programmes, methodology development initiatives and inter-agency collaboration, including thematic groups at the country level. At the institutional level, significant challenges remained in developing monitoring and accountability mechanisms; the availability and effective utilization of gender-specialist resources; and the systematic use of gender analysis as the basis for policy and programme development.

71. The report concluded that gender mainstreaming remained a critical strategy for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and that the Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions remained a valid framework for gender mainstreaming and should continue to guide the efforts of the United Nations.

72. Four conference room papers complemented the Secretary-General's report. They focused on gender mainstreaming in operational activities (E/2004/CRP.1); the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality in promoting and supporting gender mainstreaming (E/2004/CRP.2); gender mainstreaming in peace and security (E/2004/CRP.3); and gender mainstreaming in intergovernmental processes (E/2004/CRP.4).

73. A draft resolution (E/2004/L.14) adopted during the coordination segment requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all United Nations entities develop action plans with time lines for implementing the agreed conclusions 1997/2. These action plans should address the gap between policy and practice identified in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59), with a view to strengthening commitment and accountability at the highest levels within the United Nations system as well as to establishing mechanisms to ensure accountability, systematic monitoring and reporting on progress in implementation. The Council encouraged the governing bodies of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to ensure that gender perspectives were integrated into all aspects of their monitoring functions in relation to policies and strategies, medium-term plans, multi-year funding frameworks and operational activities, including those relating to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

74. The resolution also reaffirmed the commitment of the Economic and Social Council to ensuring systematic attention to gender perspectives in all aspects of its

work. It recommended that the General Assembly encourage its Committees and other intergovernmental bodies to take further measures to systematically integrate gender perspectives into all areas of their work, including the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations summits and conferences, and in particular the high-level event planned for 2005 in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004. Finally, the Council decided to undertake a further review and appraisal of the implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2 at a future session before 2010.

75. As part of the coordination segment, the Division for the Advancement of Women collaborated with the Office of Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in organizing five events, including: (a) a panel on mainstreaming gender in the work of United Nations system's intergovernmental bodies (22 June 2004); (b) a panel on gender mainstreaming in the United Nations operational activities (2 July 2004); (c) a panel on achievements in gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system (6 July 2004); (d) a thematic round table on accountability, monitoring, evaluation mechanisms and implementation plans for bridging the gap between policy and practice in gender mainstreaming (6 July 2004); and (e) a thematic round table on mainstreaming gender perspectives into sectoral policies and strategies.

IV. Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

76. The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women continued, in collaboration with other United Nations entities, to promote, facilitate and monitor gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system.

77. The Special Adviser continued to provide briefings and advice to senior management throughout the system to promote a greater understanding of gender mainstreaming and contribute to the development of capacity-building efforts, methodologies and tools. The development of briefing notes on additional sector areas has been initiated.

78. The Office of the Special Adviser played a catalytic role with Governments, United Nations entities and civil society in the area of women, peace and security. In the context of the third anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), an open debate was held in October 2003, during which a senior gender adviser from a multidimensional peacekeeping mission addressed the Council for the first time and highlighted challenges and obstacles to gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations. The Office of the Special Adviser continued to advocate enhanced gender mainstreaming and attention to the situation of women in Afghanistan and Iraq.

79. In December 2003, the second regional symposium on gender mainstreaming was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser. The symposium brought together over 100 high-level participants, including ministers, parliamentarians, senior government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations, from 17 countries in the region. The meeting discussed accomplishments, gaps and challenges; identified good practices in gender

mainstreaming; and made recommendations for expediting the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Arab countries.

80. In January 2004, the third regional symposium on gender mainstreaming was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe with the support of the Office of the Special Adviser. The meeting involved over 80 participants, from 35 member States, representing heads of national gender machineries and ministries of economy, finance, and labour and social affairs. The discussions focused on women's access to finance, assets and employment; gender budgets; pension systems; mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in economic policies; and cooperation among international organizations in supporting gender mainstreaming in the economic field at the regional level.

81. Through the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the Office of the Special Adviser continued to promote collaboration, coordination and coherence in gender mainstreaming. The Office provided wide-ranging and critical support to the Network, including to its task forces, thus helping its members to enhance their capacities to implement the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2. In its annual meeting in February, the Network launched two new task forces on gender and indigenous women and on gender mainstreaming in monitoring, evaluation and programme reporting. The Network's annual workshop reinforced gender mainstreaming in reporting, monitoring and evaluation, particularly in results-based budgeting and management, and noted that it could be effective only with the appropriate strategies, tools and supportive organizational structures.

82. Inter-agency task forces supported the incorporation of gender perspectives into intergovernmental processes. In preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society, a task force on gender and information and communication technology of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, jointly managed by the International Telecommunication Union, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, worked with Member States and civil society to highlight the differential impact of ICT on men and women and the importance of attention to gender perspectives in policy and regulatory issues.

83. Members of the Inter-Agency Network participated actively in the preparations for UNCTAD XI under the coordination of UNCTAD, the task manager on gender and trade. The task force aimed to sensitize policy makers at all levels on gender equality and promote the incorporation of gender concerns into global economic processes and trade agreements. The task force on gender and trade produced a publication entitled "Trade and gender: challenges and opportunities", which was distributed at UNCTAD XI.

84. The Special Adviser continued to chair the inter-agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security. The Task Force prepared a roster of gender specialists and a database on women's groups and non-governmental organizations that could support gender mainstreaming in conflict zones. Gender checklists for needs-assessment missions were also prepared for Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and Iraq in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Group. The Task Force produced three briefing notes for Security Council missions to (a) West Africa, (b) the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region and

(c) Afghanistan. The Task Force also worked closely with Council members to brief them on major issues in preparation for their missions, with the result that Council members met with women's groups during the missions and the mission reports made explicit reference to these meetings. The report on the mission to Afghanistan made a number of key recommendations supporting the advancement of women.

85. With the understanding that gender perspectives should be mainstreamed into all Millennium Development Goals, a workshop on gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals was organized in November 2003, sponsored by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the Network on Gender Equality of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Multilateral Development Bank Working Group on Gender. The workshop brought together more than 100 participants from governments, civil society and the United Nations system to identify good-practice examples of integrating gender perspectives into policies and interventions for achieving the Millennium Development Goals; to identify processes and tools that would encourage greater accountability for addressing gender issues in strategies for implementing the Millennium Development Goals; and to promote coordination among development agencies in their efforts to integrate gender issues into the Millennium Development Goals.[2]

86. The Special Adviser continued to provide support to intergovernmental processes. In preparation for the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser convened, jointly with the Department of Political Affairs, an expert-group meeting on the theme "Enhancing women's participation in electoral processes in post-conflict countries". The meeting discussed electoral processes in post-conflict countries, noting the obstacles to, lessons learned in and good practices in enhancing women's participation in these processes. The Division for the Advancement of Women organized an expert-group meeting on the theme "Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women — a framework of model provisions", in Ottawa from 10 to 13 November 2003, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser and the Department of Political Affairs.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

87. **Despite a quantitative increase in the references to women and gender equality in reports submitted to the various Committees during the period under review, there is still limited qualitative attention to gender perspectives. Many reports made only cursory references, and few reports contained solid gender analysis and recommendations on further action.**

88. **Similarly, attention to gender perspectives in resolutions adopted by the Assembly is often limited to brief references to women and/or gender equality, without specific recommendations on action to be taken.**

89. **The review of attention to gender perspectives in both reports and resolutions of the General Assembly seems to indicate that gender-sensitive presentation of issues in documentation before the Assembly facilitates gender-sensitive policy formulation.**

90. The following recommendations are presented to the General Assembly for its consideration:

(a) The Assembly may wish to call for continuing efforts to include attention to gender equality in reports submitted to it and its subsidiary bodies, to enhance the analysis of gender perspectives and to make concrete recommendations for further action;

(b) The Assembly may wish to call for greater attention to gender perspectives in draft resolutions adopted by its subsidiary bodies, in particular by making concrete recommendations for action aimed at achieving gender equality. The Assembly may also wish to take further steps to follow up on the implementation of these recommendations by encouraging reporting on progress made;

(c) The Assembly may wish to take specific steps to ensure gender mainstreaming in the implementation of and follow-up to major international conferences and summits, in particular in the context of the review of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2005.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution I, annexes I and II.

[2] The report of the workshop is available at http://www.worldbank.org/gender/mdgworkshop/workshopreport1.doc.